

CITY OF SEATTLE
SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Proposed Land Use Code Amendments relating to modified parking and open space requirements for multifamily structures in the First Hill neighborhood.

2. Name of applicant:

City of Seattle, Department of Design, Construction and Land Use

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

City of Seattle
Department of Design, Construction and Land Use
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98104-5070

Mark Troxel, Land Use Planning and Development Analyst
206-615-1739

4. Date checklist prepared: July 3, 2003

5. Agency requesting checklist: City of Seattle, DCLU

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

The City Council's Land Use Committee will determine when a public hearing on the proposed amendments will take place. Council is likely to vote on the proposed amendments soon after the public hearing.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

Minor revisions to the proposed Land Use Code amendments may occur through the Land Use Code amendment process. The City Council's Land Use Committee may propose amendments to DCLU's proposal and further reduce the minimum parking requirements for multifamily structures in the First Hill neighborhood due to its proximity to downtown and its high level of transit service.

- 8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.**

The Code amendment modifying open space requirements for multifamily uses in commercial zones was the subject of a Declaration of Non-Significance published November 28, 2002. The proposed amendments implement policies contained in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, which was subject to SEPA review when it was first adopted in 1994 and to subsequent SEPA review for each amendment cycle.

- 9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.**

No known public or private projects that could be affected by these proposed amendments are pending government approval.

- 10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.**

The proposed legislation requires approval from the City Council and SEPA determination. The City Council may amend the DCLU proposal. Individual projects may require additional project-level approval.

- 11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the site of the project. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)**

Refer to the Director's Report, which accompanies the proposed Land Use Code amendments, for a more complete description of proposed amendments.

This non-project action consists of proposed amendments to the Land Use Code that would modify the City's minimum parking requirements for multifamily structures in the First Hill neighborhood. Specifically, Chart A of Section 23.54.015 of the Land Use Code.

Multifamily uses, when within the Seattle Cascade Mixed zone, ((or)) the Pike/Pine Overlay District, or	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 space for each dwelling unit
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the First Hill neighborhood.	

The proposal includes modifying Seattle's SEPA parking policies to be consistent with the proposed minimum parking requirements.

The proposal also includes modifying open space requirements for multifamily uses in Commercial zones to be consistent with those in Midrise (multifamily residential) zones. This aspect of the proposal was the subject of a SEPA analysis, which resulted in a Determination of Non-significance dated November 28, 2002.

- 12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.**

The proposed amendments would apply within the First Hill Urban Village neighborhood. The First Hill Urban Village is generally bounded by Interstate 5 to the west, Union Street to the north, Broadway to the east, and Yesler Way to the south.

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT:

**EVALUATION FOR
AGENCY USE**

ONLY

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

- a. General description of the site (circle one):
Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous,
other: _____

The earth characteristics vary throughout the City from flat to steeply sloping, as would type of soils. The proposed amendments should not increase the potential for earth impacts.

- b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

The steepest slopes in the City exceed 40% and include the nearly vertical cuts of Interstate 5 retained by concrete walls.

- c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland.

Soils conditions vary considerably throughout the City of Seattle and typically include a mix of glacial till found in the urban Seattle area. No agricultural soil or prime/unique farmland is present in the First Hill neighborhood or within the City of Seattle.

- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

Not applicable. Specific project actions requiring soil analysis would require SEPA review at the time at which they are proposed.

- e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

Implementation of the proposed amendments would not result in any filling or grading activity. Specific project actions requiring filling or grading would require SEPA review at the time at which they are proposed.

- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

Minor erosion could occur during any construction if preventative measures are not implemented. The proposed amendments are not likely to result in additional erosion impacts.

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

The City is already largely developed with buildings and roadway surfaces. The proposed amendments could result in less land devoted to parking and parking-related uses, which may afford increased opportunities for landscaping, and in more efficient use of land generally. Implementation of any of the proposed amendments would not significantly change existing conditions. Individual projects may undergo SEPA review on a site-specific basis.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

None required.

2. Air

- a. What type of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

The implementation of the proposed Land Use Code amendments are not expected to result in significant long-term air emissions. Any demolition of structures in the future would generate short-term air impacts only. These individual actions may undergo project-level SEPA review, during which time air quality impacts would be assessed.

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable to this nonproject action.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

None required.

3. Water

a. Surface:

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

Many surface water bodies are located within the City limits, but no surface water bodies exist within the First Hill neighborhood. The proposed amendments are not expected to result in increased impacts on the City's surface water bodies.

- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

The proposed Land Use Code amendments do not include specific construction projects. Any actions that require work adjacent to the water reservoir may be required to undergo project-specific SEPA review.

- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

None expected.

- 4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

Not applicable. The proposed amendments are non-project actions and are not site-specific. Site-specific projects built under the proposed amendments that require surface water withdrawals or diversions may be required to undergo site-specific SEPA review.

- 5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

Parts of the City are located within a 100-year floodplain, but none of these areas are in the First Hill neighborhood. The proposed amendments are not site-specific.

- 6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

Not applicable. The proposed amendments are not site-specific.

b. Ground:

- 1) Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No.

- 2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals...; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

None.

c. Water Runoff (including storm water):

- 1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

Not applicable, as this proposal is not site-specific. Individual projects may undergo SEPA review on a site-specific basis.

- 2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable, as this proposal is not site-specific. Individual projects may undergo SEPA review on a site-specific basis. The proposal generally may result in less land devoted to parking in the First Hill neighborhood and a concomitant reduction in the rate at which pollution from parked vehicles will increase

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, or runoff water impacts, if any:

None proposed.

4. Plants

- a. Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site:

☐ deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
☐ evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
☐ shrubs: various species as ornamental landscaping
☐ grass:
☐ pasture
☐ crop or grain
☐ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk
cabbage, other
☐ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
☐ other types of vegetation

Many of the types of plants listed above may be found in Seattle. The implementation of the proposed amendments is not expected to result in increased impacts on plants.

- b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

No vegetation clearing is expected to result from implementation of the proposed amendments. Adverse impacts on vegetation resulting from individual projects may undergo environmental review on a site-specific basis.

- c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

Threatened or endangered species do exist in Seattle, including Chinook salmon. The proposed amendments, if implemented, would not likely create new impacts on threatened or endangered species.

- d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

The proposed amendments do not specifically call for use of landscaping, native plants, or other measures to preserve and enhance vegetation.

5. Animals

- a. Circle any birds and animals that have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:

fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:

There are a number of types of animals in Seattle. Developments relying on any of the proposed amendments would not likely affect animals.

- b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

Threatened and endangered species, including Chinook Salmon, can be found in Seattle. The implementation of the proposed amendments would not likely create new impacts on threatened and/or endangered species.

- c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

The City includes migratory bird species and is located within the Pacific Flyway, one of the four principal north-south migration routes for birds in North America. The Pacific Flyway encompasses the entire Puget Sound Basin. The implementation of the proposed amendments would not likely result in increased impacts on migratory birds.

- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

The proposed amendments will not affect or limit the applicability of the City's existing landscaping requirements. Developments built under the proposed amendments would still be required to comply with these landscaping requirements.

6. Energy and Natural Resources

- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

Not applicable. The proposed amendments are not site-specific. Individual developments built under the proposed amendments may undergo environmental review on a site-specific basis.

- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable. The proposed amendments are not site-specific. Individual developments built under the proposed amendments may undergo environmental review on a site-specific basis.

- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

None.

7. Environmental Health

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.

No specific projects are being proposed.

- 1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

None would be required. Developments relying on the proposed amendments would not cause increased exposure to environmental health hazards or increased demand for emergency services.

- 2) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

No measures are proposed.

- b. Noise

- 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment operation, other)?

Noise from freeway traffic, aircraft, freight, and equipment operation exists in various parts of the City at levels typical of urban areas. The proposed nonproject action is not affected by noise.

- 2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from site.

The proposed Land Use Code amendments could encourage greater production of housing, thereby indirectly increasing short-term construction noise impacts. Construction noise will be regulated according to Land Use Code provisions, and any additional measures prescribed by individual permits approvals. It is unlikely that the implementation of any of the proposed Land Use Code amendments would create non-construction noise levels in excess of city standards.

- 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

Measures to control construction noise are prescribed by individual permit approvals.

8. Land and Shoreline Use

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

There are various residential, commercial, and institutional, and recreational uses located in the First Hill neighborhood.

- b. Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe.

The site has not been used for agriculture since initially logged by settlers in the late 19th century.

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

The City is urban in character and includes a wide variety of structures.

- d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No structures will be demolished as a direct result of implementing any of the proposed amendments.

- e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Zoning designations vary widely from site to site within the City limits. The proposed amendments regarding parking would apply to residential uses located in any zone.

- f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

First Hill is located within the First Hill/Capitol Hill Urban Center.

- g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

There are no shoreline designations in the First Hill neighborhood. The proposed amendments are not expected to result in impacts on shoreline uses.

- h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify.

Some areas of the First Hill have been designated as environmentally sensitive or critical. Most of these designations are due to steep slopes.

- i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

Not applicable. The proposed amendments are not site-specific.

- j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

No displacement of residents is expected as a result of implementing the proposed Land Use Code amendments.

- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

None are proposed.

- l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and project land uses and plans, if any:

None. The proposed amendments are intended to encourage more demand-responsive parking requirements for multifamily housing projects. DCLU's proposals are not expected to create new or exacerbate existing on-street parking impacts. If the City Council amends the proposed legislation to reduce the minimum parking requirement substantially below one parking space per unit, then some spillover parking impacts would be anticipated in the vicinity of new multifamily housing developments. Consideration of project-specific factors, such as limits to on-street parking (through signage or meters) would take place for those projects that are individually subject to SEPA analysis.

9. Housing

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

The implementation of the proposed amendments may encourage greater (or less expensive) production of housing in the First Hill neighborhood.

- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

No housing units will be eliminated as a direct result of implementing any of the proposed amendments.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

The intent of the proposed amendments is to remove the portion of Seattle's minimum parking requirement that our data shows to be unnecessary. Lessening costs of constructing housing should lead to creation of more housing.

10. Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

Not applicable. The proposed amendments are not site-specific.

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

Not applicable. This proposal is not site-specific. The proposed amendments would not affect existing height limits prescribed in the Land Use Code.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

This proposal is not site-specific. All future alterations, expansions and development resulting from the implementation of the amendments would be subject to existing regulations that protect aesthetics, including land use regulations and design review.

11. Light and Glare

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

Not applicable. This proposal is not site-specific.

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

No. There is no particular site associated with this proposal.

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

None. Not applicable to this non-project action.

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

This proposal is not project-specific. Individual projects approved through this program may undergo SEPA review on a project-specific basis. All future development would be required to comply with regulations aimed at reducing or controlling light and glare impacts.

12. Recreation

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Not applicable. This proposal is not site-specific.

- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

Not applicable. This proposal is not site-specific.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

None of the proposed amendments is expected to impact recreational facilities. Individual projects may undergo environmental review on a project-specific basis. Individual land use actions are subject to SEPA review, as required.

13. Historic and Cultural Preservation

- a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.

Throughout the City, there are places and objects on (or eligible for) national, state, or local preservation registers.

None of the proposed amendments would impact these places or objects. The proposed would not change how these places and objects are regulated.

- b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

This proposal is not site-specific. Landmarks and cultural facilities are located throughout Seattle. Landmarks within the First Hill neighborhood include, among others, Harborview Hall at 300 9th Ave., The German Heritage Society Building at 613 9th Ave., Trinity Episcopal Church at 715 Cherry St., St. James Cathedral at 803 Terry Ave., Stimson Green Mansion at 1204 Minor Ave., and First Baptist Church at 1115 Harvard Ave.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any:

Not applicable. All future development is required to comply with local, state, and national regulations that require mitigation of impacts on historic and cultural resources, as applicable.

14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe the proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

Not applicable. The City of Seattle contains federal and state highways and various types of arterials that serve different functions.

- b. Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

Not applicable. The First Hill neighborhood, however, is particularly well served by King County Metro Transit. Two corridors on First Hill are classified as Major Transit Streets: Madison Street and James Street/Jefferson Street. Boren Street, Union Street, Yesler Way, and Broadway Avenue are classified as Minor Transit Streets. Much of the existing transit service in First Hill consists of downtown-oriented in-city bus routes operating on Madison, James-Jefferson, and Seneca connecting downtown to the Capitol Hill and Central District neighborhoods east of First Hill. These bus routes are long-standing routes with frequent all-day service. Several new routes provide all-day connections to additional Seattle neighborhoods and peak-commuter service to city and suburban park and rides. A downtown shuttle service also operates in the southern end of First Hill, operating in a loop on James and Yesler.

The proposed amendments may help create opportunities to develop projects that are less car-oriented and more pedestrian- and transit-friendly.

- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?

Not applicable. The proposed amendments are not site-specific. No parking would be eliminated as a result of implementing any of the proposed amendments.

The proposed amendments to modify parking requirements are based on estimates of future parking utilization. The amended minimum parking requirements are intended to be sufficient for meeting actual parking demand. No new on-street parking impacts are expected from implementing the proposed amendments.

The City Council may amend the proposed legislation by reducing the minimum parking requirement below DCLU's recommendation of one parking space per dwelling unit.

- d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

The proposed amendments do not involve creation of new streets or any other street modifications. They could potentially reduce the number of curb cuts, which in turn would enhance the pedestrian environment.

- e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable. This project is not site-specific.

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.

Not applicable. This project is not site-specific. Because the proposed amendments merely reflect existing car ownership patterns in neighborhoods with an established urban character that are well-served by transit, implementation of the proposed amendments is not expected to result in reduced car ownership rates or any change in vehicular trips per day.

The proposed amendments support the City's transit-oriented development objectives by encouraging more optimum use of land. Overall, transportation impacts may decrease slightly from those identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Transportation and circulation impacts resulting from future actions would be subject to project-specific SEPA review.

- g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any.

The proposed amendments may enhance pedestrian and bicycle travel by providing more efficient and context-sensitive parking requirements.

15. Public Services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

No new services would be required.

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

None are proposed.

16. Utilities

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other.

No new utilities are proposed. The need for lighting in surface and structured parking lots may be moderately reduced if these proposals are adopted.

- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in immediate vicinity which might be needed.

This proposal is not site-specific. No new utilities would be required.

C. Signature

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: _____
Mark Troxel, Land Use Planning and Development Analyst

Date submitted: _____

This checklist was reviewed by:

Jess Harris, Department of Design, Construction and Land Use

Any comments or changes made by the Department are entered in the body of the checklist and contain the initials of the reviewer.

D. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS

(Do not use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

The proposed amendments would not affect water discharges, air emissions, toxic/hazardous substances or noise.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

The proposed amendments would not affect plants, animals, fish or marine life.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

The proposed amendments would not significantly affect energy or natural resources.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

The proposed amendments would not affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated for government protection, nor would they impact agricultural uses, parks, scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species, wetlands, floodplains, or cultural sites.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

See response to item #8 above (Land and Shoreline Use). No incompatible uses would be allowed or encouraged by these amendments.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

The proposed amendments would not adversely affect transportation or public services. They may result in fewer vehicular trips, but the extent to which this would occur is unknown and would vary by project. See response to item #16 above.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

No conflict is known.